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A Job at Stake on U.N.

Turf Stirs Up the Big Powers

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UNITED NATIONS, N.Y., Feb. 18—To insure an independent international civil service, governments here are not supposed to stake out claims for jobs. But the Soviet Union and the United States are fighting over the post of executive secretary to a

Notes Vienna conference on the promoting peaceful uses of outer space that is due to be held next year.

The members agreed more than a year ago that the key task should go to an experienced employee, the head of the United Nations' Outer Space Division. The trouble is that the post is vacant. The ranking official is Marvin Robinson, an American with 18 years in the division. His superior is a Russian, Under Secretary General Mikhail D. Sytenko, and he will not confirm Mr. Robinson as a division chief. Mr. Sytenko has told Mr. Robinson bluntly that he has the qualifications for the post — except for his nationality.

A panel that investigates allegations of discrimination has found in favor of Mr. Robinson, but Mr. Sytenko has ignored the finding.

Last week, the United Nations' personnel chief, Assistant Secretary General James O.C. Jonah of Sierra Leone, stepped in. Mr. Jonah makes speeches about the sanctity of United Nations jobs and acts in a practical fashion. He said that Mr. Robinson should become division chief and the post in Vienna go to a newly hired Czechoslovak lawyer.

Indignant American diplomats would have none of this and have blocked further work for the conference. In the end, a compromise is expected. Mr. Robinson would get the New York job; a third-world subordinate would serve at the conference. The new Czech lawyer might then look forward to succeeding Mr. Robinson when he retires in a year or so.

The plight of Alicia Wesolowska, a United Nations employee from Poland who was arrested while on home leave and jailed by a military court for seven years on unspecified spy charges, continues to haunt the corridors here.

Her case lies behind some blunt politicking by the Soviet Union. Turkey was successfully pressing for a unanimous agreement on a resolution requiring all states to report publicly each attack on a diplomat, what had been done to punish the attackers and steps taken to prevent a repetition. The Russians were holding out, however, and this was strange because Moscow is rarely the scene of assaults on diplomats.

Turkish negotiators soon discovered the Soviet objection was a bargaining device. If Turkey would exclude international civil servants from the reporting requirement, the Soviet Union would join the consensus. The Turks did. The Russians dropped their objection. So now diplomats have an extra measure of protection, but people like Miss Wesolowska and other United Nations employees are left out in the cold.

The Swedes have compiled their annual summary of who gives what to the United Nations, lumping together both the assessments voted by the General Assembly and voluntary gifts to relief and aid agencies. The United States was still the largest single contributor in 1978 at \$590.9 million. West Germany was second with \$227.3 million and Sweden was third at \$204.2 million.

But if population was taken into account, the biggest contributor was Qatar, a Persian Gulf oil state, at \$33.50 for each man, woman and child. Norway was second at \$27.27 and Sweden third at \$23.40. The United States fell to 17th, giving \$2.66 per head.

The most elaborate measure compared contributions as a share of both population and output. On this basis, the Maldives was most generous and the United States dropped to 66th. In contrast, the Soviet Union was the eighth largest donor in crude terms and ranked 109 when both income and population were taken into account.

The table favored nations like Sweden that preferred to give aid through international organizations rather than those that gave aid directly to client countries and friends.

Kurt Waldheim, whose second term expires at the end of this year, is no

longer regarded as certain to succeed himself. So the Austrian Secretary General and his supporters are especially eager to demonstrate that he has been evenhanded in his treatment of Israelis and Arabs. Any hint of bias brings a prompt written retort from Yasushi Akashi, the Under Secretary General for Information who presides over 800 people dedicated to extolling the works of the United Nations.

During the last three years, Mr. Waldheim has indeed frequently "deplored" or "regretted" terrorist attacks on Israelis. Most recently, he was quick to acknowledge that the United Nations had wrongly accused Israeli soldiers of blowing up the corpses of guerrillas killed on Christmas Day.

He has, however, denounced more than twice as often the acts of Israel or its military allies in southern Lebanon. To be sure, no diplomat would concede that incidents in the Middle East can be compared statistically. Each is unique. But an unofficial Israeli survey during the period counts several score of occasions when Mr. Waldheim might have but did not exercise the moral authority he possesses to condemn Arab assaults.

A reporter once asked a United Nations spokesman why Mr. Waldheim had not spoken out after the dynamiting of a bus in Jerusalem that killed six people and wounded nine others. The spokesman replied with a blanket disclaimer that, "Mr. Waldheim had always condemned acts of terrorism whenever and wherever they occurred."

The notion has somehow gotten abroad that the United Nations has issued a stamp glorifying the Palestine Liberation Organization. It has not.

What it has done, by vote of the General Assembly, is print an austere new stamp advertising, "Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People." The American version, a pale green 15-cent stamp, carries the slogan between two parallel diagonal strips and the United Nations' own symbol of a globe wreathed in olive branches.